

Aurora

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY (7.30PM)

ROUNDHOUSE



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Act 1: The city laid waste

RICHARD STRAUSS

METAMORPHOSEN

INTERVAL (10 MINUTES)

Act 2: Gotham rises

MICHAEL GORDON

GOTHAM (WITH FILM BY BILL MORRISON)

INTERVAL (10 MINUTES)

Act 3: City life, love, death

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (ARR. IAIN FARRINGTON)

SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY

NICHOLAS COLLON CONDUCTOR

AURORA ORCHESTRA

Aurora Orchestra's cross-arts *New Moves* series reinvents the orchestral concert for the 21st century. Roaming fearlessly across repertoire from all periods and genres, since its launch in 2010 the series has featured an astonishing variety of collaborators, ranging from tango and capoeira dancers to theatre directors, painters, authors and animators.

New Moves visits the Roundhouse tonight for the first time as part of the 2012 Reverb Festival. The venue's industrial past has inspired a programme which looks at the city in all its guises: the bleak ruins of post-war Germany as imagined by Strauss in *Metamorphosen*; the vertigo-inducing growth of modern New York encapsulated by Michael Gordon and Bill Morrison in their spectacular collaboration *Gotham*; the passion and visceral energy of Bernstein's urban retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story.

Further information about this streaming initiative can be found on our website, www.auroraorchestra.com, where you can also see details of all forthcoming concerts. These include our next *New Moves* performance on 13 March at LSO St Luke's, featuring works by Copland, Wagner and Julian Anderson alongside five-piece folk band Harry Oakwood (Millionaire).

Act 1: The city laid waste

RICHARD STRAUSS
METAMORPHOSEN

Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, 'a study for twenty-three solo strings' is a work of profound introspection and melancholy, and marks a significant departure from the composer's

flamboyant earlier tone poems, and texts by Goethe, notably his treatise on the natural world, *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* ('The Metamorphosis of Plants') and lines from his *Zahme Xenien* ('Tame Invectives') 'No one can know himself / separate himself from his very self' stood as key sources for Strauss' work, initially planned as a choral setting.

Setting to work in the autumn of 1943, Strauss first conceived *Metamorphosen* in response to the bombing of his native Munich and the devastation of the Bavarian National Theatre, an act of destruction that for Strauss symbolised the dissolution of the nation's cultural life.

Life amid war-torn Germany saw considerable hardship for Strauss' family, notably for his son and Jewish daughter-in-law who lived under house arrest from 1938 until the close of the war in 1945.

In 1945 Strauss completed a commission from the Zurich Collegium Musicum, developing his earlier sketches into the monumental *Metamorphosen* and working amid the aftermath of the bombing of Dresden, Germany's defeat

now rapidly unfolding. Unfolding over a single movement, the opening adagio shifts to a central 'agitato' section before a tender reprise of the first adagio concludes the piece.

The piece is shaped not by the constant variation of a single theme, but through the shifting mutation of various motifs which expand, overlap and

fleeting echo other works.

Other works are woven throughout the score, including a motif associated with King Marke in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, another recalling Mandryka, the hero from Strauss' own *Arabella* and, most prominently, traces of the 'Funeral March' from Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony.

features twice, once inferred in the tugging dotted rhythm of the opening viola theme then heard again in the piece's final bars, its arrival here marked in the score with the

words 'in memoriam'.

Act 2: Gotham rises

MICHAEL GORDON

GOTHAM

WITH FILM BY BILL MORRISON

S
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collaboration
between Gordon
and Morrison,
each work seeking
to capture the
essence of a
particular city
through the
interaction of
film and music.

Gotham's first
movement
explores the idea
of retreat; in
Michael Gordon's
words, 'the places
we go to escape
New York while
being in New
York'. Opening
with trance-like,
shifting scale
patterns for solo
violin and piano,
the sparse score is
matched by gentle
scenes of a man
tending sheep. As
the music thickens,
so the view
expands to reveal
the setting of
Central Park and
a slow tumble of
smoke passing
across the
cityscape
backdrop. The
second movement
voices the zoom
and buzz of urban
life. Set amid

vintage
footage of
dizzying
skyscraper
construction and
hurtling elevator
descents, the
score is driven by
the insistent
pulse of the
snare drum,
occasionally
giving way to
passages of ghost-
like, glissando
sirens in the wind
and brass. The
work closes with
what Gordon
terms a 'wild jig'.
A striding violin
melody sets the
pace before the
orchestra swells to
a billowing
mass of sound;
'an ecstatic dance
gone wrong.'

Premiered
in 2004, *Gotham*
is an exploration
of New York City
in sound and
image, created by
composer Michael
Gordon and
filmmaker Bill
Morrison. The
piece comprises a
part of the
ongoing 'City

Act 3: City life, love, death

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (ARR. IAIN FARRINGTON)
SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY

SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY

Romeo and Juliet adapted to 1950s New York and set among two rival gangs, the Jets and the Sharks.

*First scheduled arrival 1957 **

DEPART	STATION	TRANSFERS
0:00	PROLOGUE	1 3 4 5 6 10 12
	Stalking orchestral prelude; growing rivalry between the gangs	
4:15	SOMEWHERE	2 3 8
	A dream sequence; the gangs are united	
8:50	SCHERZO	11
	The dream continues; a land beyond the city streets	
10:10	MAMBO	1 3 4 6 10 12
	A rival dance between gangs	
12:30	CHACHA	3 6 11
	The lovers meet and dance tenderly	
13:20	MEETING SCENE	8
	The lovers exchange first words	
14:10	COOL	1 2 3 5 7 10 12
	Steely jazz counterpoint; the Jets control their aggression	
17:55	RUMBLE	1 5 10 12
	The gangs battle and both leaders are killed	
19:50	FINALE	8 9 13
	The music of the lovers transforms into a funeral procession	

KEY:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Prominent use of the 'Maria' tritone motif | 8 Tender soli strings |
| 2 Originally a song | 9 Tender soli strings underpinned by tolling bass tones |
| 3 Originally a dance | 10 Snapping syncopation |
| 4 Cowbells and timbales unleashed | 11 Lightly sprung syncopation |
| 5 Hissing cymbal | 12 Snarling brass |
| 6 Latin rhythms | 13 Reprise of 'Somewhere' melody |
| 7 Full-blown fugue | |

*EXTENDED TIMETABLE:

Arr. 1918; Dep. 1990: Composer Leonard Bernstein

Arr. 1960: Symphonic Dances arrangement by Leonard Bernstein
(orchestrated Sid Ramin & Irwin Kostal)

Arr. 2011: Chamber arrangement by Iain Farrington, commissioned by Aurora

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ELECTRIC GUITAR
Huw Davies

ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR
Dave Brown

VIOLIN I
Ania Safonova, Emily Davis,
Catrin Win Morgan
Ben Roskams, Naoko Keatley,
Alex Afia

VIOLIN II
Jamie Campbell, Helena Nicholls
Hannah Dawson, Tom Hankey
Charlotte Reid

VIOLA
Max Baillie, Morgan Goff
Robin Ashwell, Ben Roskams
Meghan Cassidy

CELLO
Oliver Coates, Sarah McMahon
Jonathan Rees, Cara Berridge
Ashok Klouda

DOUBLE BASS
Ben Griffiths, Rebecca Welsh
Dave Brown

SOUND DESIGN
Ian Dearden
(Sound Intermedia)

GUEST APPEARANCE BY
Sam Swallow (voice/piano)

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